

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for performing an injection using a passive needle guard including a body having a medicine cartridge therein and a shield slidably attached to the body, the body retained by 5 cooperating catches on the body and the shield in a first position wherein the needle is exposed, the body being biased to retract with respect to the shield towards a second retracted position for covering a needle extending from the cartridge, the method comprising:
  - 10 inserting the needle into a patient's skin while holding the shield a predetermined distance therefrom;
  - applying a distal force on a plunger communicating with the cartridge to inject medication into the patient until the plunger contacts a latch member extending from the passive needle guard;
  - 15 depressing the plunger further to deflect the latch member to disengage the cooperating catches, wherein the body becomes biased to move towards the retracted position; and
  - releasing the distal force on the plunger, thereby 20. retracting the body towards the retracted position, wherein the needle is substantially covered by the shield.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the needle is withdrawn from the patient, as the body is retracted towards the retracted position.

5. 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the needle is withdrawn into the shield as the body is retracted towards the retracted position.

10. 4. The method of claim 1, wherein cooperating detents on the shield and the body engage one another when the body is retracted to the retracted position, thereby preventing subsequent movement of the body with respect to the shield.

15. 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the latch member comprises a finger extending from the shield towards the plunger, the finger being compressed and thereby deflected radially outward to disengage a catch thereon from a mating catch on the body when the plunger is depressed.

20. 6. The method of claim 5, wherein the plunger includes a radial portion for engaging a proximal tip of the finger as the plunger is depressed, the finger being compressed by the radial

portion as the plunger is depressed to deflect the finger radially outward to disengage the catch thereon from the mating catch on the body.

5. 7. The method of claim 1, wherein the distal force is applied to the plunger while holding finger grips on the shield, thereby holding the shield the predetermined distance from the patient's skin.

10. 8. The method of claim 1, wherein the shield remains substantially stationary with respect to the patient's skin while medication is injected into the patient.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the shield does not come in contact with the patient's skin while medication is injected into the patient.

10. A method for performing an injection using a passive needle guard including a body having a medicine cartridge therein and a shield slidably attached to the body, the shield being biased to move distally with respect to the body, the body and shield being retained by cooperating catches in a position

wherein a needle extending from the cartridge is exposed, the method comprising:

inserting the needle into a patient's skin while holding a portion of the body;

5 applying a distal force on a plunger communicating with the cartridge to inject medication into the patient until the plunger engages a latch member extending from the passive needle guard;

depressing the plunger further to deflect the latch member to disengage the cooperating catches, whereupon the shield

10 advances automatically into contact with the patient's skin; and withdrawing the needle from the patient's skin, whereby the shield continues to advance distally with respect to the body until the needle is substantially contained within the shield.

15 11. The method of claim 10, wherein cooperating detents on the shield and the body engage one another when the needle is substantially contained within the shield, thereby preventing subsequent movement of the body with respect to the shield.

20 12. The method of claim 10, wherein the latch member comprises a finger extending from the shield towards the plunger, the finger being compressed and thereby deflected radially.

outward to disengage a catch thereon from a mating catch on the body when the plunger is depressed.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the plunger includes a 5 radial portion for engaging a proximal tip of the finger plunger as the plunger is depressed, the finger being compressed by the radial portion as the plunger is depressed to deflect the finger radially outward to disengage the catch thereon from the mating catch on the body.

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14. A passive needle guard, comprising:

a body having proximal and distal ends and a cavity therein for receiving a medicine cartridge having a distal tip for administering a medication from within the cartridge;

15 a shield having proximal and distal ends, the shield slidably attached to the body, the body being biased to retract with respect to the shield from a first position wherein the distal tip of the cartridge is exposed towards a second retracted position for withdrawing the distal tip of the cartridge into the 20 shield;

cooperating catches on the body and the shield for holding the body and shield in the extended position; and

a latch member extending proximally from the proximal end of one of the shield and the body, the latch member being deflectable for disengaging the cooperating catches upon depression of a plunger coupled to the medicine cartridge, 5 whereby the body may be retracted to the retracted position.

15. The passive needle guard of claim 14, further comprising a trigger flange extending radially outward from the plunger, the trigger flange configured for deflecting the latch 10 member to disengage the cooperating catches upon depression of the plunger.

16. The passive needle guard of claim 15, wherein the trigger flange comprises a pocket for receiving a proximal tip of 15 the latch member, whereby an intermediate portion of the latch member is deflected radially outward for disengaging the cooperating catches when the tip of the latch member is received in the pocket and the plunger is depressed distally.

20 17. The passive needle guard of claim 15, wherein the trigger flange is located at a predetermined position location

the plunger for disengaging the cooperating catches at an intermediate portion of the plunger stroke.

18. The passive needle guard of claim 15, wherein the latch member comprises a proximal tip surface that is angled radially outward, whereby, upon depression of the plunger, the trigger flange engages the surface to deflect the latch member radially outward to disengage the cooperating catches.

10 19. The passive needle guard of claim 15, wherein the trigger flange comprises a tapered distal edge, whereby, upon depression of the plunger, the tapered distal edge of the trigger flange engages the latch member to deflect the latch member radially outward to disengage the cooperating catches.

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20. The passive needle guard of claim 14, further comprising one or more finger grips extending from the shield.

21. The passive needle guard of claim 14, wherein the body and shield comprises cooperating detents for substantially permanently the body in the retracted position.

22. The passive needle guard of claim 14, further comprising a medical cartridge received in the cavity such that a distal tip of the cartridge extends beyond the distal end of the body.

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23. The passive needle guard of claim 22, wherein the distal tip of the cartridge comprises a needle.

10 24. The passive needle guard of claim 21, further comprising a locking mechanism on the proximal end of the body for locking the cartridge received within the cavity.